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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office in Angola

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 3 of Security Council resolution 1294 (2000) of 13 April 2000, in which the Council, *inter alia*, requested me to provide every three months a report on developments in Angola, including recommendations about additional measures the Council might consider to promote the peace process in that country. It covers developments since my previous report, of 11 April 2000 (S/2000/304).

II. Political developments

2. The absence of dialogue has continued to create an unstable political and military situation in Angola, despite the efforts of the Government to consolidate its authority throughout the country. The União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), led by Jonas Savimbi, continued its guerrilla activities during the period under review, impeding the free circulation of people in certain areas and causing an increase in the total numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees. In addition to an influx of refugees into neighbouring countries, particularly Namibia and Zambia, with the attendant adverse socio-economic consequences for those countries, the conflict also caused an increase in tensions between Angola and Zambia. The Governments of the two countries have accused each other of violations of territory, with the Angolan authorities alleging that Zambia continued to support the UNITA rebel movement.

3. However, following a four-day meeting of the Angola-Zambia Joint Defence and Security Commission in Lusaka, it was announced on 1 July 2000 that an agreement had been reached between the two countries to establish a 10-member Joint Verification Team whose principal responsibility would be to investigate charges of border violations. The two parties also agreed to create a permanent communication link between their regional military commanders and security chiefs in the Provinces of Moxico and Cuando Cubango in Angola and the north-western and western provinces in Zambia.

4. Efforts to promote a dialogue for peace have continued. On 28 April, a coalition of Angolan opposition political parties presented a list of proposals to the Government entitled "Agenda for Peace". The group endorsed the pastoral letter of the Catholic Church mentioned in my previous report and the initiative of the inter-denominational committee for peace in Angola. It also called on the National Assembly to seek ways and means to convince the President, José Eduardo dos Santos, and Mr. Savimbi to cease hostilities and agree to a broad-based dialogue for peace and genuine national reconciliation.

5. Holden Roberto, leader of the Frente Nacional para a Libertação de Angola (FNLA), in an opening address to the second congress of his party on 15 May, also appealed for dialogue to end the conflict. He noted a number of conditions for the holding of free and fair elections in the country, including the cessation of hostilities and the re-establishment of dialogue between President dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi. Mr. Roberto also called for a population census and the establishment of an independent electoral commission.

6. The President of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano, in his capacity as the current Chairman of

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the Southern African Development Community, announced his intention in April to call for an urgent meeting of the ruling political parties of the 14-member organization to explore ways and means of putting an end to the war. However, invoking the concept of sovereignty, President dos Santos rejected the initiative as inopportune. He argued that the conflict was an internal matter and that Angolans have not yet exhausted all the possibilities for resolving it. The Presidents of Burkina Faso and Togo also appealed for dialogue between the Government and UNITA.

7. On 25 April, President dos Santos, in a speech in Nigeria, criticized some African leaders for interfering in the internal affairs of his country and for extending support to UNITA. The Government subsequently carried out an intensive diplomatic campaign to change the venue of the summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) from Lomé. Referring to the report of the Panel of Experts established by the Security Council (S/2000/203), the Government accused President Eyadéma of sanctions-busting and of supporting UNITA.

8. Angolan Church leaders have also continued to call on UNITA and the Government to seek a negotiated peace. The Angolan Episcopal Conference, the Protestant Council of Christian Churches and the Angolan Evangelical Alliance recently declared in a joint statement that they were ready to mediate talks between the parties. In order to pursue possible venues for peace in Angola the Church leaders have set up a 12-member panel of Church officials. On 11 June, they organized a march for peace that culminated in an open-air ecumenical service in Luanda with the participation of other members of civil society and of political parties, with the exception of the ruling party and members of the Government. The group met with the Speaker of the Angolan National Assembly on 13 June 2000 to explain its peace initiative.

9. UNITA has reacted positively to the Church initiative, while the Secretary-General of the Movimento Popular para a Libertação de Angola (MPLA) argued that there could be no dialogue so long as Mr. Savimbi continued to maintain a private army and was obsessed with taking power by force. The Speaker of the National Assembly stressed the unwillingness of the Government to continue to be pressured into dialogue or agreements whose implementation could not be guaranteed. In a speech he delivered at Caxito, Bengo Province, on 19 June, President dos Santos reaffirmed the validity of the Lusaka Protocol and indicated that Mr. Savimbi and his supporters could be forgiven if they renounced war. According to the President, the ongoing political and military campaigns are aimed at exerting pressure on the rebel movement to return to the implementation of the provisions of the Protocol.

10. In a related development, during an interview in May 2000, Mr. Savimbi told an Angolan private newspaper that a summit between President dos Santos and himself would bring an end to the civil war. He alleged that the rejection of dialogue by the Government and the continuation of sanctions against his movement were clear indications that the Government and the United Nations were conspiring to eliminate him. The Government reacted by referring to the interview as "fake" and accusing the publisher of deliberately seeking to rehabilitate Mr. Savimbi's image by presenting him as a man of peace and reconciliation.

11. Meanwhile, in-fighting within the opposition political parties in Angola has continued. The dispute regarding the leadership of the UNITA parliamentary group threatened to further split the party. For its part, the FNLA splinter group led by Lucas Ngonda decided to withdraw the special status accorded to Mr. Roberto, the founder of the party. It also decided to suspend the mandate of all party members in Parliament, allegedly for their continued allegiance to Mr. Roberto.

12. UNITA recently released the five Russian crewmen who had been taken hostage in May 1999. Meanwhile, the Frente para a Libertação do Enclave de Cabinda (FLEC) kidnapped three Portuguese and Angolan nationals working for a construction company in Cabinda Province.

13. My Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa, Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari, visited Angola from 16 to 22 May 2000 to discuss with the authorities the prospects for peace in Angola and the terms of reference of the United Nations Office in Angola. During his stay, he met with President dos Santos as well as with several senior Government officials and members of political parties and civil society.

III. Military situation

14. Government forces continued to be effective in further reducing the conventional war capability of UNITA, which has pursued its guerrilla activities, particularly along the border with Zambia. The Angolan Armed Forces launched operation "Hexagon" in mid-April after several weeks of delay due to the persistence of the rains, which hindered the deployment of heavy equipment and logistical ground support. The operation, which covered six different battle fronts, was aimed mainly at destroying the residual conventional forces of UNITA and its new strategic mobile command post stationed in an inaccessible area south of Malange Province and east of Bié Province (Quirima and Sautar).

15. With improved weather conditions, Government sources reported that the Angolan Armed Forces took Cuemba, Munhango and Luando areas, and were advancing towards Quirima and Sautar. From their new advance command post at Luena, the capital of Moxico Province, the Angolan Armed Forces also launched offensives southwards to capture UNITA elements attempting to regroup near the Zambian border. Government sources allege that a significant number of UNITA troops were moving freely through the Angolan-Zambian border with the connivance of Zambian forces. Tension between Angola and Zambia heightened in May when the latter alleged that Angolan forces in pursuit of UNITA clashed with Zambian troops, resulting in military and civilian casualties. Similar operations carried out with the permission of the Namibian authorities resulted in the Government of Angola taking control of almost all of its southern border. Namibian security forces were reported to have sealed the border in the Caprivi Strip to prevent the retreat of UNITA forces into Namibia. In retaliation, UNITA rebels reportedly conducted attacks in Namibia and rendered the north-eastern (Kavango region) part of the country insecure. Several civilians were recently reported killed and government installations as well as private property in the area were attacked.

16. There are reports that in the central highlands the Angolan Armed Forces have made substantial gains, consolidating positions around the localities of Huambo, Vila Nova and Vista Alegre and along the road eastwards towards the provincial capitals Kuito and Luena. Some isolated terrorist acts were reported in Huambo city, where on 22 April an explosive device blew up the national television repeater antenna. UNITA forces were also reported to have briefly reoccupied the localities of Cuse and Lunge, threatening the town of Bailundo. Apart from the unexpected attacks in Zaire Province on 27 April and 7 May, threatening the Soyo oilfields with two sabotage operations, UNITA troops in the north were also alleged to have advanced to the vicinity of Sanza Pambo and Dange. The rebel forces also reportedly attacked and briefly occupied Zenza do Itombe (80 kilometres east of Luanda) in Kwanza Norte Province and Calomboloca (60 kilometres east of Luanda) in Bengo Province on 14 and 25 May, respectively. Meanwhile, despite sporadic UNITA ambushes on Government military convoys, the security situation reportedly improved in the diamond-rich north-eastern region. The Angolan Armed Forces and the police continued to protect the main diamond-mining areas in the Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul Provinces, limiting UNITA activities to acts of banditry against the unprotected civilian population.

17. The hostilities have had a negative impact on law and order throughout the country. In addition to its traditional role, the Angolan National Police has been fighting alongside Government forces. It is reported that civilians were being armed and organized in civil defence groups in some areas of potential confrontation with UNITA not only to protect the population but also to assist in the fighting. Observance of human rights by the police improved during the reporting period, although individual acts of abuse and misconduct remained a problem. Some army and police elements were recently accused by local non-governmental organizations of perpetrating human rights abuses, including the killing of villagers suspected to be UNITA sympathizers in the Lunda Norte, Lunda Sul, Malange and Moxico Provinces. The prompt investigation of alleged abuses by the police, and appropriate disciplinary actions against the culprits, remain vital in maintaining the credibility and legitimacy of the institution in the eyes of the population.

18. Regarding the investigations into the crashes of two United Nations aircraft in Angola on 26 December 1998 and 2 January 1999 (UN 806 and 806A, respectively), Angolan authorities recently confirmed that security has been consolidated in the area of the first crash and that they were ready to assist the United

Nations recovery team to visit the site. Arrangements are therefore under way to dispatch the team.

IV. Human rights aspects

19. Although the overall human rights situation in Angola remains grave, there are indications that the Government is prepared to recognize the existence of abuses and to develop regular procedures to redress them with the support of the international community and members of Angolan civil society. Recently, there have been both negative and positive signs. There seems to be a growing understanding on the part of different local actors of the need for respect of human rights and good governance as a means of contributing to the ending of the conflict. However, particularly worrying have been actions taken against journalists that had a chilling impact on freedom of expression.

20. The Human Rights Division of the United Nations Office in Angola intensified its efforts to support programmes that approach human rights as an essential component of a lasting peace. These efforts involved close coordination with the United Nations system (the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights). They concentrated on work with internally displaced persons and possible returnees to Angola from other countries, as well as efforts to improve Government capacity to respect basic human rights and to respond to violations. The Division held discussions with senior officials of the Government on the importance for peace and national reconciliation of devising a creative plan for the respect of basic rights, including an effective municipal justice system, as the State extends its administration to areas recently taken over from UNITA.

21. Community-based initiatives undertaken with partners in the Government, churches and non-governmental organizations are showing a slow but encouraging growth in their impact on the overall human rights situation in Angola. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is working closely with international non-governmental organizations to encourage the engagement of local actors, both within the Government and outside it, with human rights issues. Meanwhile, the Human Rights Division is conducting a survey to measure human rights awareness and understanding among the population in general. So far, research shows that Angolans know their rights better than they know the mechanisms for exercising them.

Child protection

22. The plight of children in general is a particularly acute feature of the long years of conflict in Angola. Generations of children have grown up in the midst of conflict, which for many is the only reality they know. This is true not only for the large number of child combatants but also for the thousands of children who have been victimized through displacement, separation from and loss of families and physical injuries. To address the needs of these children a coordinated and sustained approach will be required from the international community throughout Angola.

23. In order to increase the level of child protection within Angola, there should be greater efforts to insist on the need to refrain from targeting civilians, to secure access to vulnerable populations comprising largely women and children and to ensure the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former child combatants. It is also essential to stress the special needs of the large number of children who are victims of mine injuries as well as the vast number of internally displaced women and children who have fled to the urban centres as a consequence of the ongoing conflict. Efforts should continue to include child protection advisers as an integral part of the Mission in all relevant areas of deployment so as to ensure that the protection of war-affected children is dealt with in a comprehensive manner.

V. Humanitarian situation

24. The humanitarian situation in Angola remains precarious. During the period under review, more than 1 million persons continued to rely on food distributions to survive and an estimated 2.5 million people received some kind of humanitarian assistance. Although humanitarian agencies maintain large-scale, life-saving operations in areas with high concentrations of displaced persons, only limited progress has been made in improving general living conditions. Most of the populations displaced since 1998 continue to live in provincial capitals where access to agricultural land is restricted and families are forced to rely on coping mechanisms that provide only basic subsistence. During his visit to Angola in May, my Adviser for

Special Assignments in Africa expressed concern at conditions in camps for internally displaced persons in Luanda and Huambo Provinces. In an effort to support the populations at risk, United Nations agencies continue to provide agricultural inputs, non-food items, health care, water and sanitation programmes, general distributions and food-for-work opportunities.

25. By the end of the period, the World Food Programme (WFP) was facing a possible breakdown in the food pipeline from the end of August 2000. In an effort to protect the pipeline for the "hunger gap" in September and October, and because many families will have food stocks for approximately three months following the harvest, WFP reduced the number of beneficiaries receiving direct food assistance by approximately 20 per cent during June and July. At Luena, where more than 69,000 at-risk persons received direct assistance in April, the caseload was cut by 60 per cent. United Nations agencies have expressed serious concern about the possible onset of hunger in certain locations unless urgent steps are taken to strengthen the pipeline from September onwards. Following the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/WFP food and crop supply mission in mid-April, WFP estimated that the number of people in need of food assistance would increase from 1.1 million to 1.5 million. On the basis of assessments, nutritional agencies recommended that emergency rations be increased to 2,100 kcal from the current level of 1,800 kcal.

26. Although the nutritional situation remained positive in most locations, in some areas malnutrition rates have increased. In the Sangando camp, 30 per cent of children screened suffered from malnutrition. At Kuito, where WFP was able to deliver only 50 per cent of food requirements owing to limited air access, the number of young children in supplementary feeding centres rose during the period under review. Reports also suggest that malnutrition rates may be rising in certain municipalities around Huambo. In the hard-hit city of Malange, on the other hand, and the surrounding towns of Cangandala, Kulamuxito and Lombe, malnutrition rates improved as a result of proactive interventions during the past year aimed at supporting at-risk families. More than 103,000 persons were reportedly displaced in 14 provinces during the period, the largest movements occurring in Bié, Kwanza Norte, Huíla and Lunda Sul Provinces. Return movements involving an estimated 4,000 people were reported in May and June in Kwanza Norte and Zaire Provinces.

27. A meningitis outbreak was reported in Huambo municipality although an epidemic was prevented by a coordinated rapid response. A slight increase in the number of reported polio cases occurred in Luanda and Benguela Provinces. A relatively large number of trypanosomiasis cases were reported in villages around Uíge town. During the second week of June, the Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund conducted the first phase of a three-stage polio vaccination campaign. Angola remains one of the few countries in the world where polio is endemic and it has been specifically targeted this year during the worldwide campaign to eradicate the disease. Approximately 600 persons participated in the mobilization campaign which aims to vaccinate 3 million children under 5 in 164 districts. United Nations agencies estimate that 20 per cent of the target group is inaccessible because of the prevailing insecurity.

28. In a major step forward, a detailed plan of action for the implementation of the recommendations contained in the rapid assessment of critical needs was drafted. During the rapid assessment conducted early in April, 14 inter-agency teams visited 31 locations in 10 provinces to identify the most acute needs of at-risk populations. By mid-June, six sub-working groups comprising representatives from Government Ministries, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations had identified concrete steps in food security, health and nutrition, resettlement, mine action, water and sanitation, protection and education. The plan of action, which will be formally presented by the Government in early July, is expected to form the framework for humanitarian interventions during the second half of 2000.

29. Humanitarian access to at-risk populations increased during the reporting period as new locations came under the administration of the Government. These locations included Maquela do Zombo (population 3,947) in Uíge Province, Cangandala (population 26,200) in Malange Province and Cuvelai (population 5,416) in Cunene Province. Andulo (44,207) in Bié Province and Bailundo (25,096) in Huambo Province also became accessible, although humanitarian agencies were not yet operational because of ongoing insecurity. At Calenga (2,054), Lepi (3,570)

and Longonjo (16,785) in Huambo Province, humanitarian programmes aimed at supporting at-risk displaced populations were launched. United Nations agencies conducted an assessment at Camenongue in Moxico Province although no operations have begun, owing to expected insecurity. Almost all areas along the eastern and southern borders remain inaccessible to humanitarian agencies. The Mine Action Programme of the United Nations Office for Project Services reported in May that the number of landmines and unexploded ordnance ranges between 6 million and 7 million and that 79 different types of devices have been found.

30. Road access remained restricted throughout the country, only coastal roads and routes within the security perimeters of major provincial cities being useable by humanitarian agencies. Road links between provincial capitals were also insecure in the central and eastern parts of the country. More than 70 per cent of all humanitarian assistance was delivered by air because of restricted surface routes. However, airstrip damage at Kuito and Negage continued to delay deliveries, thus placing hundreds of thousands of persons at further risk. By early June, repairs at Negage airport had been completed and it was possible to resume large-scale humanitarian operations.

31. At the end of June, the number of internally displaced persons was estimated at 2.5 million, approximately 20 per cent of the total population of Angola. Of that number, 1,051,848 were officially registered by a United Nations agency or by a non-governmental organization. The June figure represented a small decrease from early May when the reported number of displaced persons was 2.6 million. The reason for the reduction was clarification of the caseloads of internally displaced persons by provincial governments and the return movements in Kwanza Norte and Zaire Provinces.

32. As part of ongoing efforts to find durable solutions to the problems of internal displacement, provincial authorities are drafting resettlement plans for implementation in the near future. As a follow-up to the rapid assessment, the Government has been working with United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to draft minimum operational standards for the resettlement of displaced populations into safe areas outside the cities. The minimum standards specify preconditions for resettlement as well as targets for post-relocation assistance, and are expected to be presented by the Government in July.

VI. Socio-economic situation

33. The consequences of the prolonged conflict in Angola bring to the fore many critical development problems and challenges which affect the achievement of the fundamental objective — sustainable human development — of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In spite of the constraining context, assistance continued to be rendered to the Government to help it address the serious humanitarian and development crises facing the country. The country office of UNDP remained committed to the need for a coordinated and effective United Nations response to Angola's humanitarian and development challenges.

34. Sustained support to poverty reduction measures was reinforced through the recent UNDP commitment to collaborate closely with the World Bank to assist the Government to prepare a poverty reduction strategy paper. Poverty has become endemic, with some 78 per cent of the rural population and 40 per cent of urban dwellers living below the poverty line. The poverty reduction strategy paper, part of the staff monitored programme package, is considered by the Government as an essential component of its policy towards poverty reduction and macroeconomic reform. United Nations gender-related activities concentrated on supporting national preparations for participation in the Beijing-plus-five special session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. The main challenge was helping to ensure a participatory process involving a broad range of women's organizations as well as promoting collaborative dialogue between civil society and the Government, particularly the Ministry of Family and the Promotion of Women.

35. Meanwhile, the economy continued to face serious macroeconomic instability, with a 96.3 per cent accumulated inflation rate at the end of May, implying significant erosion of the purchasing power of Angolans and greater poverty. The grave macroeconomic environment prompted the Government to reach an agreement with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on a staff monitored programme until the end of the year, to be followed by a full structural adjustment programme.

36. The effects of the war have been felt on the social infrastructure in the urban and semi-urban areas, where the continuous influx of displaced populations coupled with poor maintenance has reduced access to piped water, education and health, etc. Life expectancy at birth is 46 years, and only 32 per cent of the population has access to safe water, some of the lowest indicators among developing countries.

37. Production in agriculture and manufacturing has been very poor. In agriculture in particular, mines, military attacks and general insecurity have driven the population from the land in the central highlands, the cereal basket of the country, and in the northern provinces, where cash crops like coffee were produced, thus plunging them into poverty and eventual displacement to urban centres. Although the oil sector is growing, its effect on other sectors of the economy will depend on the smooth implementation of the IMF programme, and on an eventual expenditure switch in favour of the social sectors and other parts of the economy.

38. UNDP continued to provide support to the capacity-building of Government institutions, such as the Ministry of Social Assistance and Reintegration, for the coordination of humanitarian assistance. Support also continued to be rendered to mine-action activities critical for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the movement of the internally displaced persons. Follow-up efforts were made to draft and implement as soon as possible an action plan aimed at addressing the issues raised in the report of the United Nations inter-agency mission led by Carolyn McAskie, Emergency Relief Coordinator a.i., which visited Angola from 18 to 23 March, with the objective of reviewing existing protection arrangements and humanitarian assistance being provided to internally displaced persons and assessing the operational capacity of the United Nations agencies on the ground.

39. Concern with the insufficiency of reliable and updated social and economic statistical data, particularly with regard to the war-affected populations and areas, led UNDP to commission studies focusing on aspects fundamental for the achievement of the goal of sustainable human development, namely the impact of HIV/AIDS on the war-affected population, particularly the internally displaced persons; the impact of the internally displaced persons on the environment; the impact of the internally displaced persons on the local government structures; and the impact of population movements on the overall structure of Angolan society. It is expected that the information generated will be useful for strengthening the national response to the serious situation of the internally displaced persons and the definition of policies to improve the living conditions of the war-affected populations.

VII. Observations

40. As I have stated in my previous reports, UNITA bears the primary responsibility for the return to war in Angola. Its refusal to comply with key provisions of the Lusaka Protocol (S/1994/1441, annex), in particular its failure to demilitarize its forces and to allow State administration to be extended throughout the country, precipitated the resumption of widespread hostilities.

41. I remain deeply concerned by the continuing fighting and its devastating effects on the population. As disturbing is the absence of any meaningful attempt to reach a political settlement of the conflict. In an effort to engage the Government of Angola in a discussion of these issues, my Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa visited Angola in May and held useful talks with President dos Santos, senior Government and MPLA officials, and members of political parties and civil society. It was agreed that further talks would be held and that, in consultation with the Government, he would pay further visits. Meanwhile, the head of the United Nations Office in Angola has been selected and I expect to inform the Security Council very shortly of the appointment.

42. Although Government forces continue to make progress in reducing the conventional war capability of UNITA, guerrilla activities persist in many parts of the country, perpetuating the prevailing insecurity among the population and considerably reducing the amount of humanitarian assistance that can be delivered by road. As indicated in the present report, the humanitarian situation in Angola remains very serious. I reiterate my appeal to all parties concerned to facilitate the delivery of emergency relief assistance. As I have done in the past, I also urge the donor community to respond as generously as possible to the 2000 United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Angola.

43. Although the overall human rights situation in Angola remains grave, there are indications that the

Government is prepared to recognize the existence of abuses and to develop regular procedures to address them. I welcome this development. The Human Rights Division of the United Nations Office in Angola will continue to provide assistance to the Government in the area of human rights capacity-building.

44. With the Government's recovery of vast areas of national territory as a result of its successful military campaign against UNITA, there is an urgent need to begin to rebuild the destroyed physical and social infrastructures and to provide the war-fatigued population with the opportunity to maintain sustainable livelihoods. The United Nations system and the international community as a whole will continue to support the Government in its efforts to supply basic services to the people of Angola, including those living in regions formerly occupied by UNITA.